

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 09420 211608Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0376

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 9420

STADIS//////////

EXDIS

FOR MATTHEWS NEA/EGY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MIL EG US

SUBJECT: MOVEMENT OF USSS BOULDER

REF: STATE 256801

1. I WAS INITIALLY PUZZLED AT REFTEL SINCE I INTERPRETED REFERENCE THEREIN TO BOULDER "STAYING IN PORT UNTIL NOV 30" TO MEAN ISMAILIA WHERE THE SHIP IS BASED. I HAVE SINCE SEEN JCS 3770 WHICH MADE IT CLEAR THAT PORT SAID WAS TALKED ABOUT.

2. WHILE I CLEARLY WOULD NOT WISH TO HAVE THE BOULDER TRAPPED IN THE EVENT OF HOSTILITIES, I CONSIDER IT A SERIOUS MISTAKE TO KEEP THE SHIP IN PORT SAID. WHEN ARRANGING FOR BOULDER TO GO TO PORT SAID, WE TOLD EGYPTIANS IT WAS FOR 48-HOUR PERIOD SO THAT SHE COULD BE REPLENISHED BY DETROIT. FAILURE TO ABIDE BY WHAT WE SAID IS CERTAIN TO CAUSE EGYPTIANS TO SUSPECT USG KNOWS SOMETHING ABOUT HOSTILE ISRAELI INTENTIONS. IT WILL HAVE UNFORTUNATE EFFECT OF HEIGHTENING LOCAL TENSIONS AT THE VERY TIME WHEN WE HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH SOME SUCCESS TO REDUCE THEM. ADDITIONALLY, THE DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT MARSHAL ISMAIL SPECIFICALLY ASSURED GUAY THAT THE VESSEL AND CREW WOULD BE PROTECTED. FAHMY TOLD ME THAT THE MARSHAL PASED GUAY'S QUESTION AND ANSWER TO PRESIDENT SADAT. UNLESS
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THERE ARE DEMONSTRABLE MECHANICAL OR ENGINEERING PROBLEMS

WHICH CAN BE SHOWN TO JUSTIFY BOULDER REMAINING IN PORT SAID FOR LONGER PERIOD, KEEPING HER THERE INSTEAD OF RETURNING TO ISMAILIA WILL BE VIEWED AS QUESTIONING THE MARSHAL'S AND GOE'S WORD. I HOPE THESE POLITICAL FACTORS WILL ALSO BE GIVEN DUE WEIGHT IN MAKING THE DECISION. THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR JCS TO ACT SHORTSIGHTEDLY.

3. I HAVE GOTTEN WORD TO CARROLL NOT TO DISCUSS HIS FUTURE PLANS FOR BOULDER WITH EGYPTIANS OR WITH OTHER FOREIGN OFFICIALS. HE HAD, OF COURSE, ALREADY TOLD THEM EARLIER THAT THE SHIP WOULD BE BACK IN TWO DAYS AND THEY KNOW THIS. ON BASIS OF MESSAGE FROM JCS, CARROLL ADVISES THAT THE BOULDER, WHICH WAS DUE BACK IN ISMAILIA TODAY, IS BEING KEPT IN PORT SAID. IN ORDER AVOID AROUSING EGYPTIAN SUSPICIONS, TRUST DECISION WILL BE REACHED SOONEST TO SEND BOULDER BACK TO ISMAILIA. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: USS BOULDER, SHIP MOVEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974CAIRO09420
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740337-0511
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741125/aaaaautn.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: STATE 256801
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14-Aug-2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <14 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOVEMENT OF USSS BOULDER
TAGS: MPOL, EG, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005